

WILKINSON) BARKER) KNAUER) LLP

2300 N STREET, NW
SUITE 700
WASHINGTON, DC 20037
TEL 202.783.4141
FAX 202.783.5851
www.wbklaw.com

November 17, 2005

Filed Electronically

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary of the Commission
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: *Hearing Aid-Compatibility Report (WT Docket No. 01-309)*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Pursuant to the Commission's *Hearing Aid-Compatibility Report and Order*,¹ attached please find a Hearing Aid-Compatibility Report submitted on behalf of Inland Cellular Telephone Company ("Inland"), the general partner of Eastern Sub-RSA Limited Partnership and Washington RSA No. 8 Limited Partnership.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned with any questions that you may have at (202) 783-4141.

Sincerely,

WILKINSON BARKER KNAUER, LLP

By:


William J. Sill

Attachment

¹ Section 68.4(a) of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Telephones, WT Docket No. 01-309, *Report and Order*, 18 FCC Rcd 16753 (2003).

HEARING AID-COMPATIBILITY STATUS REPORT

November 17, 2005

**Eastern Sub-RSA Limited Partnership
Licensee of:**

**WA5 (B2) Washington 5 - Kittitas RSA
Call Sign: KNKQ283**

and

**Washington RSA No. 8 Limited Partnership
Licensee of:**

**WA8 (B) Washington 8 - Whitman RSA
Call Sign: KNKN489**

**ID1 (B2) Idaho 1 - Boundary RSA
Call Sign: KNKQ400**

**ID2 (B2) Idaho 2 - Idaho RSA
Call Sign: KNKR305**

Inland Cellular Telephone Company (“Inland”), the general partner of Eastern Sub – RSA Limited Partnership and Washington RSA No. 8 Limited Partnership (collectively “the Partnerships”), hereby provides the Commission with the Hearing Aid-Compatibility Status Report (“Report”), as required by the Commission’s *Hearing Aid-Compatible Report and Order*.¹ Inland is submitting this report, on behalf of the Partnerships, in order to provide the Commission with the current status of the Partnerships’ efforts and progress toward compliance with the Commission’s hearing aid-compatibility requirements. The Commission requires Commercial Mobile Radio Service (“CMRS”) carriers that sell digital handsets to sell hearing aid compatible handsets (“HAC compliant handsets” or “HAC handsets”) that are properly labeled as such.² In preparing the instant Report, Inland followed the guidelines the Commission set forth in its *Hearing Aid-Compatible Report and Order*.³

¹ Section 68.4(a) of the Commission’s Rules Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Telephones, WT Docket No. 01-309, *Report and Order*, 18 FCC Rcd 16753 (2003) (“*Hearing Aid-Compatible Report and Order*”).

² The Commission states that a hearing-aid compatible handset is one that meets the U3 performance rating under the American National Standards Institute (“ANSI”) C63.19 standard. See 47 C.F.R. § 20.19(b)(1).

³ See *Hearing Aid-Compatible Report and Order*, 18 FCC Rcd 16787.

**Licensee Name and Contact Information:
Eastern Sub-RSA Limited Partnership
Washington RSA No. 8 Limited Partnership**

c/o

William J. Sill, Esq.
Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP
2300 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Tel: (202) 783-4141
Fax: (202) 783-5851
Email: wsill@wbklaw.com

INTRODUCTION

As stated in its November 17th Hearing Aid-Compatibility Status Report,⁴ the Partnerships, as small “Tier III” carriers, do not purchase a sufficient number of handsets to be allowed to buy directly from the handset manufacturers. Instead, the Partnerships must rely on ‘middle-men’ or third-party vendors who purchase new handsets from manufacturers and then sell them to small carriers. The Partnerships regularly purchase handsets from the following third-party vendors: Brightpoint, Cellstar, and Brightstar. Currently, the Partnerships stock CDMA handset models from the following equipment manufacturers: Nokia, Kyocera, Motorola, and LG.

The Partnerships’ attenuated relationship with equipment manufacturers adversely impacts the Partnerships in several respects. First, it is difficult to obtain up-to-the-minute information concerning equipment manufacturers’ planned offerings. Second, prior experience with E911 Phase II ALI equipped handsets has shown that this distant relationship results in the Partnerships receiving the newer more desirable handset models long after the larger CMRS carriers receive them.

Inland, on behalf of the Partnerships, has kept abreast, as best it can, with hearing aid-compatible handset offerings. Inland keeps in regular contact with third-party vendors and equipment manufacturers and has again requested the latest information related to the status of manufacturers’ plans to provide HAC compliant handsets. As noted below, presently the Partnerships are able to provide new phone subscribers with a limited, but increasing number of HAC handsets. In addition, Inland continues to implement and refine its customer outreach efforts.

INFORMATION REQUESTED IN *REPORT AND ORDER*

1. Digital Wireless Phones Tested

As discussed at Item 4 below, the Partnerships offer 3 handsets that manufacturers have deemed HAC compliant. This information is presumably for the three compliant handsets from the respective manufacturers, Motorola, Nokia and Kyocera, as Inland has relied on their compliance with the Commission’s Part 2 rules.

⁴ See Hearing Aid-Compatibility Status Report for Eastern Sub-RSA Limited Partnership and Washington RSA No. 8 Limited Partnership, filed November 17, 2004 (“November 17th Status Report”).

2. Laboratory Used

Inland does not know which laboratory or laboratories were utilized by Motorola, Nokia and Kyocera to obtain HAC handset data, Inland is relying upon representations of equipment vendors and manufacturers that the HAC compliant models discussed in Section 4 are, in fact, HAC compliant.

3. Test Results

Inland has not reviewed Motorola's, Nokia's and Kyocera's test results but has been informed that the handset phone models discussed in Section 4 are HAC compliant.

4. Phone Models which Manufacturers State are Hearing Aid-Compatibility Compliant and ANSI C63.19 Rating:

Based on Inland's efforts to gather equipment information from its third party vendors and equipment manufacturers, Inland understands that both of the Motorola handsets offered by the Partnerships are HAC compliant Kyocera has not been able to supply testing information on the current models the Partnerships sell, although past models have been compliant. Also, Nokia states that the Nokia 6255i is compliant. Therefore, the Partnerships have 3 handsets that are HAC compliant – the Nokia 6255i, Motorola V710, and Motorola V265It should be noted that, to the best of the Partnerships' knowledge, LG has not tested and/or has no phones that comply. Inland has learned that there are several new phone models that are scheduled to come out in November and December from Nokia and Kyocera (the Nokia 3155i, 6155i, and 6235i in addition to the Kyocera Dorado), and the Partnerships understand that they will be HAC compliant. The three HAC compliant handsets listed above now account for thirty-eight percent of the handsets sold by the Partnerships

Inland also understands that along with the HAC compliant Nokia, Kyocera and Motorola offerings, Motorola offers integrated earpiece speakers ("dynamic speaker") that will couple with, and be compatible with, telecoil equipped hearing aids in all its current wireless handsets. In addition, Motorola offers a hands free loop-set accessory. The loop-set is a headset that plugs into a handset and is worn around the subscriber's neck. The loop-set wirelessly retransmits the audio signals through the loop-set back to the hearing aid.

5. Product Labeling Information:

The Partnerships are able to provide their subscribers with new handsets through their retail cellular stores and through third party agents that sell the handset manufacturers' products.⁵ The Partnerships understand and will continue to comply with the Commission's requirement that service providers ensure that information concerning HAC compliant handsets, and more particularly a handset's U-Rating, is made visible to their subscribers. Motorola has stated that in all future shipments it will affix appropriate HAC complaint labels on the outer packaging of their handsets. Also, the Partnerships have signage prominently displayed at their retail locations which identify HAC handsets.

⁵ The Partnerships' agents generally sell Partnership provided handsets.

6. Outreach Efforts

Since filing their November 17th Status Report with the Commission, the Partnerships continue to train their retail employees to identify and provide information regarding hearing HAC compliant handsets and accessories, such as the loop-set accessory, to the Partnerships' current and prospective subscribers. The Partnerships believe that one of the most effective ways to disseminate information to its consumers is at the point of sale. The Partnerships will continue to educate their retail staff on HAC issues and the developing technology offered through the equipment manufacturers, so that their retail staff can continue to function as a source of reliable and current information.

The Partnerships intend to continue to build on their efforts to educate both their potential subscribers and their current subscribers on the HAC compliant handsets being offered:

- The Partnerships continue to supply their retail staff with informational materials concerning the compliant handsets and accessories. In the future, the Partnerships will continue to provide informational literature at the Partnerships' retail stores concerning compliant handsets and accessories as it becomes available and the number of HAC compliant phones increases; and
- Inland continues to regularly update its web site as new HAC handset information becomes available, calling attention to the HAC compliant handsets and accessories; and
- Staff have been instructed to direct interested customers at point of sale stations to access Inland's HAC web pages via in-store computers. Additionally, signs have been installed at each point of sale station with updated information about HAC compliant handsets and accessories.

7. Retail Availability of Compliant Phones:

The Partnerships have one of each of the three HAC compliant handsets active and available for customers to try out in each store. This will allow customers to try each phone before they purchase in order to easily find the HAC option that is best for them. As noted above, of the 10 current handset models the Partnerships presently offer,⁶ three handset models are, according to their manufacturers, HAC compliant. In addition, the Partnerships continue to offer Motorola handsets that have dynamic speakers (Motorola V60s) which Motorola states renders it compatible with telecoil equipped hearing aids.

8. Efforts to Incorporate Hearing Aid-Compatibility into Newer Models:

As noted above, Inland understands that all of the Motorola handsets it sells, prior Kyocera models it has sold, and the Nokia 6255i handset, are HAC compliant. In addition, Inland has been informed that certain manufacturers, such as Motorola, offer handsets with integrated dynamic speakers that will allow for coupling with hearing aid telecoils making the handsets compatible with these hearing aids.

⁶ The Partnerships offer 10 current handset models. Several discontinued handset models, however, are still available for purchase by subscribers until the Partnerships' in-stock supply runs out.

9. Activities Related to ANSI C63.19 or other Standards of Work:

Inland and the Partnerships will continue to keep abreast of developments in HAC handsets through third party vendors, review of manufacturer's publicly available documents, consultation with its counsel, and interfacing with industry organizations of which Inland is a member.

10. Total Numbers of Compliant and Non-Compliant Models Offered as of November 17, 2005

As noted above, of the 10 current handset models the Partnerships presently offer, three handset models are, according to their manufacturers, HAC compliant. The Partnerships calculate that approximately 38% of the handsets provided to new subscribers are HAC compliant handsets. Additionally, the percentage of handsets provided to new subscribers should continue to increase as the Partnerships add the new models that will soon be available.

The remaining seven handset models offered by the Partnerships are not HAC compliant. The Partnerships are pleased to report that there are several different types of accessories that can be used to make non-compliant handsets more compatible with hearing aids. Based on its review of available literature, the Partnerships believe that many of their other handset offerings would be compatible with loop-sets as well as with the Plantronic's hands-free headset.⁷ The Partnerships currently offer both these accessories to their subscribers. In addition, the Partnerships now offer the Hearing Aid Telephone Interconnect System ("HATIS") as an accessory for subscribers with hearing aids.⁸

11. Ongoing Efforts for Interoperability Testing with Hearing Aids:

Due to their status as small carriers, the Partnerships are reliant upon handset manufacturers and industry standards groups to work towards a standard for interoperability testing as well as to conduct such tests.

12. Information Regarding Differences in Handset Offerings Among Regions in Service Areas:

The Partnerships are small carriers with four systems located in two adjacent states. To date, the Partnerships have not noticed any discrepancies in the handset offerings between the four systems.

⁷ Plantronic's hands-free headset, which is similar in function to a loop-set, appears to be compatible with telecoil-equipped hearing aids.

⁸ The HATIS is a small device that fits over the subscriber's ear next to the hearing aid and plugs directly into the audio jack of a wireless handset.